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Bard

= = = = =

Darkness moonlight silence
sounds of far-off traffic
raccoon cough in underbrush.
Eat these. They feed your dream.

26 June 2009

= = = = =

Not to admit infirmity
or permit
the reasoning of incapacity
to argue present pleasure—

walk on the grass
until it kills you
stay up late
smoking the opium of moonlight.

27 June 2009

= = = = =

People who sweat
forget
they were ever cold.
Since the caves
we have been told
remember
by great teachers, all
the ones whose names I can't recall.

27 June 2009

MOONSHINE

Nothing rhymes with what I really mean—

there is a billboard on the moon
whose advertising changes so slowly
that one generation hardly
understands what the next one
thinks they read up there
by way of instruction.

Year by year religions come and go,
they keep their names but change
the inner nature of the god[s] they
worship. Thus the Jews began
by worshiping a few local deities,
settled on one warrior god of hosts
whose name they still reverently apply
to an almost abstract deity of high
compassion and intelligence they
almost worship now. And a Christian
goes through life performing the same
rituals, mouthing the same glorious
or tawdry liturgies, but all the while
his inner sense of what the words mean
or what he means by saying them
changes as the moon instructs him

when he studies it at night or just
by valid or mistaken inference from
its light reflected on other people's faces.

Just so a man mostly looks at his lover's face
to see what the moon is selling us these days.

*

But spoken with respect. O moon
my cramer also in the sky, TV far
and present concubine, minstrel mine
and all-forgiving — from no one do you
hold back your shine. o my coolest
comfort and la-di-da, my all-night
dope palaver and queen of space!
Listen careful how she does by me:
she lets me love each thing I see
and guess the rest. So much for me.

*

My own appalling minstrelsy
though don't blame on her.
Or me either, as we say,
it is the ether, the between-space

shimmering with misunderstanding,
the tuneful opportunities that leave us old.
lute and *Lied* and aria and rap
when *arioso dolente* is what we need,
a singing silence stung by grief

27 June 2009

= = = = =

A train is going by
at any other hour of the day
would be far-away
but here in the valley of midnight
a quarter-mile of air
brushes my shoulder.

27.VI.09

DE ISIDE TRIPLICI

O Isis, Nephthys and Osiris, three in one, approach us!

That's what I cried out as the luminous figure glided towards us, then towards a mirror slightly to our right. Earlier, she had been a smaller figure I watched dancing – something I had never seen. I cried out to Charlotte to come watch the dance. It was a person dancing – at first awkward, then slowly smoother and swifter – on the bones of her pelvis and legs alone. No flesh, no skin, and the bones all fused together, like great white horns or calipers, stiff, but the dance augmented. You and/or they come to watch when I called, and we all watched as the dancer grew taller and taller. Now a head appeared above the keystone-shaped, blunt torso, and the head had no face or features, yet was full of personhood. And as she grew, arms happened too, and she raised them to her chest and opened her body, spreading it wide so we could see inside much whiteness and a vague sense of structure, like shelves. At the back of that cavity, a sheet of common metal, from which or around which her light poured out at us. She approached us speaking, growing taller as she moved, all bone and light and magnitude— powerful sense of her greatness, the greatness of this being. She veered slightly so as to stand in front of a tall mirror to our right. She paused there, as if considering the nature of her own light, as God might have looked on the seventh day, contemplating what had been made. And I cried out what I said, *O Isis, Nephthis, and Osiris*, because I recognized her as Isis and the rest, all one, all trinity in that unity.

I was tremendously excited by the dream, and woke closer to actual waking, where I continued dreaming, dreaming now that I was awake, and in that

shallower dream I “analyzed” my dream in terms of language, as if Isis had taught me (again!) that language is structure—not the coy vacancies of the bright and beautiful body, the hollow body of light, but only language, and language gives us the only structure there is.

dreamt at dawn, 28 June 2009

= = = = =

A pencil balancing the moon—
easier at full, tricky now
in the Byzantine last days
of her crescent—a smutty
inference always available
at the eastern end of Mare Nostrum,

I have seen it from the sky
like Egypt and the Nile's mouths
or the Iron Gates on Danube
or a cloud that looks like wine—

everything wants to be in the Bible.

28 June 2009

HUMANISM

Street lights in hell
red lights in heaven
waiting for GO

prohibition palm trees—
approach the merest

some things are made small
so we have to approach them
on our knees

Reverence is the only open mind.

28 June 2009

= = = = =

When I finally became somebody else
it was better for a while

but I kept creeping back in
until the swimming pool was empty

duck decoys scattered off the shelf and sank
and my beard turned white

where was I waiting
all the while somebody else was right?

28 June 2009

= = = = =

The rising sun
is the punch line
in a joke somebody
told in dream
we all forgot.

28 June 2009

Sheetmusic

= = = = =

He slept like a miracle
and woke like a dog – always
something new to chase
like a flag trying to outrun the wind

28 June 2009

Sheetmusic

= = = = =

Where do things go?

Am I someone else today?

Sweet breezes

a footprint left in the mind.

28.VI.09

= = = = =

Secular humanism is the same as magic.

It thinks human attitude
affects the operation of the world—

that's why the churches hate humanism:
humanism wields miracles
the lepers are cleansed, the grieving

are consoled, the poor are fed.

What Jesus said
somebody finally listened to.

28 June 2009

= = = = =

I thought I was drowning

then I was dreaming.

Now I wonder what the difference is

when we have to do everything over again.

28.VI.09

= = = = =

To be here before the sun
just gets over the trees
and be ready for the light
armed with my own
darknesses arrayed
to give some deeper meaning to the day—
show fight they used to say
of such fish as I must be
trawled by that potentate aloft.

You have to fight the natural because it's easy,
resist the easy because it is easy,
make a nuisance of yourself,
a gall on the oak tree
from which Voltaire will fetch his bitter ink
or Blake his luminous contradictions.
You have a right to be wrong.

29 June 2009

= = = = =

Familiar smell from unfamiliar place comes—
what then? This is how you begin to learn
history, tribes of men ever on the go,
prowl of beauty round the edges of fact.

Surprise yourself and forget the one you were—
another love is on the way this afternoon,
be there when the door gets pounded on
or the bell rings or a sly shadow topples
across the book you long ago stopped trying to read.

History has caught you now, genderless, tender,
every fact seems to tremble on your skin
because you have been here from the beginning.

There is nowhere to go. Kings and their concubines
crowd round you, trying to cheer you on.

29 June 2009

= = = = =

Wait a bit upon the opening of her smile—
I know where I need to be now but I don't know why,
the semi-ventral surface of your right thigh
as my outback landscape drenched in moonlight
any time of day or night—the ground itself
is luminous and all the Christians flee
leaving Christ alone with me and your nakedness
as if you are Australia my southern continent
and I can say all I ever want to you
and you will be museum of my silences
knowing all the words I meant to say
but lost in the angry distances or even
the tumbled welcome of the surf around your shore.

29 June 2009

= = = = =

Will my flower ever open she asked
and then the volcano began to speak.

29.VI.09

= = = = =

Prickled by pine cone
earth responds
Soil soul. To grow
its task. To stop
ours. Sharing
the quietest war.

29.VI.09.

= = = = =

I felt it falling
the first like a gnat
grazing my scalp
then another
and another and
it was raining.
It felt like the first time.
I stood up and went inside,
this is shelter, I thought,
and felt I had been
through something
and come through safe.
Feeling and thinking.
Cool wetness on my brow
thinking nothing.

30 June 2009

VALETUDO

Stop treating myself like an invalid
as I've been doing for a week.

Si tu vales, ego quoque valeo—

that's where healing starts:

in seeking the welfare of the other—

if you are hale, then I'm hale too,

hale and well and hope to be of use.

30 June 2009

= = = = =

My notebook these days
sounds too much like a diary.
It's supposed to be a dairy
milk and butter for my betters
till you're all well-nourished
on my cheese, then I'll be well
and come out buy your bread.

30 June 2009

= = = = =

Eventually have to forget
otherwise pain and no need
more of that – we walked
all through that small
Italian night talking it out
fingering each pain: *remember*
me it seemed to say
what we did to each other
was small refusals only
inside an immense yes.
It was like a tree at dawn
you put in front of you to shield
your precious eyes from the determined light.

30 June 2009

ARS POETICA

Trim it down to wood.
Say everything
then cut away the truth—
what's left is the truth.

30 June 2009

= = = = =

Glossy grackle. Crow.

A turkey clucking.

Trees on guard.

At last I realize that *morning* is a verb.

30 June 2009

Things raked away still trail these empty furrows.

— G.Q., *Preverbs*

I have tried to fit my fingers in them
in all the losses, all the arroyos now
where rivers were, and went, and left,
and then my forearms, finally my face
found a choice socketing nestled furrow where
the earth I smelled was altogether new
and that's what I most desired
especially of any animal I could call *you*
could call me back by any name
you chose, me lying on my face in contact
deep with everything that has ever been
as it was now new, new now.

Not known now known.

I wanted you to bring me to life again—
what is this business with getting born
why should it happen only once—
do it again to me do it again
it's not too much to ask it all to be my mother,
every time you touch me is my mother
and every word you utter gives me birth.

30 June 2009